(d) if so, whether any steps have been taken so far in the matter and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether the issue would be taken up with the Government of Bangladesh and if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The Government of India is aware of the reports that agencies inimical to India's interests, including the ISI, are misusing the territory of Bangladesh for their anti-India activities. The Government of India has been regularly taking up these security related issues with Bangladesh at different levels through diplomatic channels and institutional mechanisms existing between the two countries. The Bangladesh Government has stated that it will not allow undesirable elements to use its territory for activities prejudicial to the security interests of India.

Waiving of Visa charges for Hindu and Sikh Afghan Nationals

1250. SHRI P.N. SIVA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have waived visa charges for all Sikh and Hindu Afghan nationals for entry into India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All Afghan nationals including Sikhs and Hindus are issued gratis visas by Indian Missions and Posts abroad and their visas are extended gratis by Foreigners Regional Registration Officers in India.